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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 003469

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/25/2025

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: DAWA PARTY LEADER PLEASED WITH CONSTITUTION

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT FORD FOR REASONS
1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶11. (C) Dawa Party leader Jawad al Maliki told PolOff August 24 that he is pleased with the draft constitution. While acknowledging that some groups, especially the Sunni Arabs, are not completely satisfied, he is confident that the constitution treats all groups fairly.

¶12. (C) Sunni Arabs, Maliki said, are strongly opposed to federalism and de-Ba'athification. The Shia and Kurds, however, have agreed upon these two issues. The Shia and Kurds feel that devolving power to the provinces is the best safeguard against a future dictatorship. Maliki said there is no doubt Iraq will be a federal republic. He is, however, willing to discuss the details of Iraqi federalism with the Sunni Arabs.Q

¶13. (C) The issue of de-Ba'athification, Maliki said, was settled when the TNA voted to ban the Ba'ath party. He said that Ba'athists ruined Iraq and that many of its members were criminals. The goal of de-Ba'athification is not to expel or kill former Ba'athists, but to simply prevent former high-ranking members from holding positions of high authority where they could oppress Iraqis again. Only 5 percent of former Ba'athists, he asserted, have been removed from their jobs.

¶14. (C) Comment: Maliki is a top Da'wa party member who has sometimes been involved in the negotiating sessions. He is generally thought to be harder line on relations with the Sunni Arabs. His viewpoints above are indicative of the consensus now existing among the more conservative elements of the Shia Coalition which makes it harder to gain big concessions on federalism and de-Baathification that would help us gain Sunni Arab support for the constitution.

Khalilzad